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BLUE CREW SMILES

The Maple Leafs' Blue Crew girls join 18-year-old Mackenzie Ballantyne for a special moment on Monday at the Mastercard Centre, where the Leafs held their 37th annual skate day for Easter Seals Kids. Meanwhile, uncertainty continued for the franchise Monday as GM Dave Nonis said no player is untouchable in the team's rebuild mandate. **See story, page 28.**

RICK MADONIK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The skinny on **Fat Tuesday**
PAGES 10, 26

Grocery store booze put on ice

LCBO. Liberals put skids on long-awaited plans to widen availability of liquor in the province

The LCBO has shelved plans to put express kiosks in Ontario grocery stores, a spokeswoman has told Torstar News Service.

The Liberal government told the liquor agency to halt the long-awaited addition of booze outlets in supermarkets as the province overhauls the way beer and liquor is sold across Ontario, the government-run liquor agency said.

"In light of the work currently being done by the premier's advisory council on government assets, the provincial government has asked LCBO to put a hold on the LCBO Express Stores initiative," spokeswoman Heather MacGregor confirmed.

The Finance ministry did not respond to Torstar's request for comment Monday.

The blue-ribbon panel on monetizing provincial assets, led by former TD Bank chairman Ed Clark, recommended keeping the LCBO in public hands while expanding operations and charging The Beer Store a franchise fee.

Finance Minister Charles Sousa generated a lot of buzz when he announced the pilot program last spring to put express liquor kiosks in 10 grocery retailers by the end of 2014. The government missed that deadline, but said at the time that plans were still in the works to have some installed in 2015.

After the concept was unveiled last April, grocery stores had to apply to the province by May 9, 2014, for a chance to install the store-within-a-store, which would sell a wide variety of beer, spirits and wine, including craft beers and VQA wines.

Critics found the terms and geographic restrictions of the kiosks strict. Grocery stores were to be responsible for all construction costs, lighting and power, and needed to use signage and designs that are up to LCBO specifications, according to the Request for Proposal.

The LCBO updated Torstar last November that it was in talks with only three retailers — in Toronto, Mississauga and London — but had not yet completed deals or revealed exact supermarket locations where alcohol would be sold.

"The LCBO was in the process of finalizing lease agreements with (the three) host retailers," MacGregor said Monday.

"These negotiations are now on hold. Respective retailers have been notified," she added.

Two weeks ago, Premier Kathleen Wynne quashed the idea of Quebec-style beer sales in Ontario variety stores, despite promising improved access for Ontario consumers this spring by changing the private Beer Store monopoly.

Wynne told Torstar last December that Ontarians can "expect some change" in the new year to the way booze is sold in the province, including a rethink of the government's deal with the foreign-owned Beer Store.

But she did not rule out the possibility of beer being sold in supermarkets, such as Loblaws, and big-box retailers like Costco.

Clark's panel also recommended the government-owned LCBO be allowed to sell 12-packs of beer instead of just six-packs. The lucrative 12-packs and 24-packs currently cannot be sold at liquor stores.

The province is still exploring the panel's recommendations and Sousa is to formally reveal the government's overhaul of beer and liquor sales in the March budget.

Progressive Conservative finance critic and Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli said, "The whole exercise is just a cash grab. It's not designed to make it a better experience for the customer, or to lower prices.

"I think it will be a revenue overhaul that won't be noticeable to consumers," he added.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Quoted

"The whole exercise is just a cash grab. It's not designed to make it a better experience for the customer, or to lower prices."

Vic Fedeli, PC finance critic and Nipissing MPP

Rural stores

There are already 216 LCBO agency stores in rural Ontario that sell spirits and suds alongside groceries, but none have been allowed in urban centres to date.

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Valets say they won't be sorry to see Bay-Bloor scramble go

Pedestrian priority signal. Wait times cut by eight per cent but vehicle delays tripled and crashes doubled, city staff report claims

LUKE SIMCOE
luke.simcoe@metronews.ca

If anyone knows how the pedestrian scramble at Bay and Bloor affects traffic, it's Shawn McNamara.

The valet at Holt Renfrew drives through the intersection countless times every day while parking customers' cars. Since the scramble — which grants an all-way pedestrian crossing in between green lights but gives waiting cars fewer chances to advance — was installed in 2010, the drive takes longer. "It can be frustrating, especially during rush hour," he said. "It really backs the cars up."

"Yeah, you expect the light to turn green, and then bam, it's still red," echoed McNamara's colleague, Derek Morris.

Scrambles still popular

Although the city is pushing to remove the scramble at Bay and Bloor, pedestrian-friendly signals are still popular among Torontonians. Even at Bay and Bloor, 75 per cent of drivers support the initiative, according to a recent report.

Fortunately for valets — but maybe not pedestrians — relief could be around the corner. The city has mused about scrapping the scramble since 2013, and a new staff report to city council suggests its days are numbered.

"While prioritizing walking is a goal of the city's official plan … the installation of the pedestrian priority phase at the intersection of Bay and Bloor has offered only modest benefits to pedestrians and comes at a significant cost to motorized modes of transportation," the report reads.

While the scramble has reduced pedestrian wait times by eight per cent, the report claims delays for vehicles have tripled at peak hours. Crashes have also doubled in the intersection since the scramble was implemented, something the city attributes to "driver frustration."

A report from the Public Works and Infrastructure committee recommends removing the scramble crossing at Bay and Bloor. RICK MADONIK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The scramble should be removed "as soon as is practicable," the staff report says. It would cost about $26,000. The report is slated to go before committee later this month.

"I'm not happy to see a scramble intersection removed," said Walk Toronto founder Dylan Reid. "However, the loss would be easier to accept if transportation services provided a list of alternative intersections where their criteria indicated scramble intersections could work, and the city began working on establishing one of them to take the place of the one at Bay and Bloor."

Reid also wants a guarantee from the city that the Bloor-Yonge and Yonge-Dundas pedestrian scrambles will remain. The staff report says the scrambles have a much higher ratio of pedestrians to vehicles than Bay and Bloor.

For example, 71 per cent of users at Yonge and Dundas are pedestrians, compared to only 55 per cent at Bay and Bloor.

1 in 3 Ontario workers lack benefits: Report

One-third of Ontario employees receive no medical and dental benefits through their workplace, with low-income workers and women most likely to be excluded, says a report to be released Tuesday.

The study by the Wellesley Institute, a Toronto-based health policy think-tank, shows that the vast majority of those in precarious or low-wage jobs do not have employer-provided health plans. The report notes that those workers are not often eligible for government-funded benefits either, leaving a significant gap in health coverage.

"We know that not having access to those services can have significant health impacts," said Steve Barnes, a policy analyst at the Institute and co-author of the report.

"The way we operate our benefits systems at the moment, with this patchwork of public and private schemes, just means that people who are low earners are missing out."

Overall, the research found that about 35 per cent of workers in the province do not have medical and dental coverage through their employer. The figures were much starker for low earners: about 85 per cent of those earning less than $10,000 receive no workplace health benefits, and about 70 per cent of those earning between $10,000 and $20,000 are not covered.

"If we continue to rely on employers to try and plug the gaps … then this problem is likely to get larger," Barnes said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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T.O. gamers looking to press start on 'barcade'

Business. Aspiring bar owners want to bring back atmosphere of the video arcade

LUKE SIMCOE
luke.simcoe@metronews.ca

From left: Kenny Ng, Malcolm McKie and Owen Smith are going retro with their idea for a new downtown bar.
LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

They're calling it a sports bar for video games.

Kenny Ng, Owen Smith and Malcolm McKie are trying to launch an arcade-themed bar in downtown Toronto. Their vision includes rows of arcade cabinets, consoles built into the counter and games such as Street Fighter 2 playing on the big screen.

"The arcade is a really social environment," Ng said. "We're hoping that with a bar we can recreate that culture where people come out and play games instead of playing at home or online."

Ng, 26, is a competitive arcade-game player and assembles his own homemade arcade cabinets. He's always wanted to open a video-game bar and has found the right partners in Smith and McKie.

"I've worked in bars for most of my adult life," said Smith. "And I also play a lot of video games, so I figured I could make work fun by bringing the two together."

They've yet to settle on a name but are going by Retro Toronto for now. They've completed their business plan and are looking for investors to insert a few coins into the project.

After getting some buzz on social media, Ng says they may also start a crowd-funding campaign to build equity.

"I really feel all the different arcade communities around Toronto would come together and support us," he said.

The trio is inspired by the success of local board-game cafes such as Snakes and Lattes as well as by New York's Barcade, which boasts microbrewery suds and classic arcade titles.

"They've actually copyrighted the name," Smith said. "So ours will be a barcade in spirit."

Quoted

"Arcades are all about meeting people. You can just pop in a quarter and play with a stranger."
Kenny Ng

Space

Three GTA residents finalists for Mars trip

A half-dozen Canadians remain in the running for a controversial plan by a Dutch-based organization to establish a colony on Mars by 2025, including three people from the GTA.

They are among a group of about 100 from which Mars One will select a final 24 people to man the missions.

One year ago, 75 Canadians were selected from more than 202,000 who applied in 2012.

Mars One says the mission will cost about $6 billion and says it can be done using existing technology.

But engineers at Boston-based MIT, who analyzed the feasibility of the mission last year, suggest they'll need new technology to keep humans alive once they get there. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Transit. Tory to pitch SmartTrack in Ottawa

Ahead of the upcoming federal election, Mayor John Tory is heading to Parliament Hill to pitch his idea for SmartTrack beyond the prime minister's office.

Tory will be travelling in Ottawa from Tuesday until Wednesday afternoon, meeting with both Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair for the first time since his election.

"I'm obviously going to be pitching them on SmartTrack and getting them to buy into it," Tory told Torstar News Service on Monday night, acknowledging that any one of the parties could be in power by next year. "I want them all, whatever position they're in after the election, I want them all to be supportive of Toronto and understand what Toronto's needs are."

Shortly after being sworn in as mayor, Tory first met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper at Toronto Pearson International Airport in early December. Those talks, according to Tory and his team, largely centred on transit and the mayor's campaign pledge to build a 22-stop, heavy rail line that stretches from Mississauga through Union Station to Markham.

Though that line, as proposed, runs primarily on existing GO rail tracks, Tory has promised to bring in both the provincial and federal governments to help cover the estimated $8 billion needed to see it run in seven years. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Quoted

"If anybody shows up with money in hand.... I'll be there."
Mayor John Tory

We invite you to attend a public meeting to learn more about the Relief Line Project Assessment.

Four identical sessions will be held:

Tuesday, March 3, 2015
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Calvary Church
746 Pape Avenue

Thursday, March 5, 2015
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Riverdale Collegiate
1094 Gerrard Street East

Monday, March 9, 2015
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
St. Lawrence Hall
157 King Street East

Thursday, March 12, 2015
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Christ Church Deer Park
1570 Yonge Street

TORONTO

RELIEF LINE

STUDY OVERVIEW
The City of Toronto's City Planning Division, together with the TTC, is planning a new rapid transit line to connect the Yonge-University-Spadina Subway downtown to the Bloor-Danforth Subway east of the Don River. This line will relieve crowding on Line 1 (Yonge-University-Spadina Subway), at Yonge-Bloor Subway Station, and on the surface transit routes coming in and out of downtown.

THESE MEETINGS
We are currently seeking feedback on potential station areas and the evaluation criteria that will be used to determine the preferred alignment and station locations.

AFTER THESE MEETINGS
Potential corridors and station areas will be evaluated towards identifying a preferred route and station locations for the Relief Line, along with benefits and potential impacts. The final evaluation of the preferred option will follow the requirements of an Ontario Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP).

GET INVOLVED! We understand that good planning involves the community. If you'd like more information, please contact us:
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Tel: 416-338-1065 TTY: 416-397-0889
For more information visit : **ReliefLine.ca**

Warming stations bring colour to frozen beaches

Winter. Designed by Ryerson students, the structure offers respite from frigid weather

Stepping through the waist-high entryway into the Snowcone warming hut on Kew Beach is like entering a pineapple cathedral. The yellow, pink and orange panels infuse the thin winter sunlight with warmth while the oblong structure blocks the frigid wind.

"The tropical colours make it feel like it isn't -20 C outside," said Marc Piché on Monday, while his daughters, Maelle and Isla, climbed on the lifeguard tower enclosed within.

A team of Ryerson architecture students had finished affixing the individual plastic panels only minutes before, and already dog walkers, joggers — and yes, even cross-country skiers — were stopping to check out the striking structure.

Inspired by the form of a pine cone, the Snowcone was designed to act as a stained-glass greenhouse when it's sunny, while using protruding white petals to catch falling snow and transform the hut into an igloo after a storm.

"It goes from transparent to opaque, using snow for insulation," said Lily Jeon, who designed the structure on a computer with classmate Diana Koncan. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

People take photos in the art installation Snowcone during the city's first Winter Stations Design Competition at Kew Beach on Monday.
MARTA IWANEK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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St. John's Bakery teaches craft of artisanal bread

Aaron SanFilippo, a director at the St. John's Mission TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"There's something about the smell of bread that lifts you up," declares Father Roberto Ubertino.

"You're dealing with very basic elements of water and flour, and there's a daily miracle that takes place because you are transforming these basic elements."

It sounds like something you might hear in a church sermon, but Ubertino, executive director of St. John the Compassionate Mission, isn't being figurative. At St. John's Bakery, he sees how baking bread can change lives, one loaf at a time.

The modest shop, adjacent to the mission near Queen and Broadview, carries organic, artisanal bread that is also available at markets, restaurants and specialty stores across the city. Authentically imperfect baguettes and round loaves of country rye and cilantro olive line a small set of wooden shelves. The product is high-end, but St. John's is not a typical business.

"It's a social enterprise," explains administrative director Aaron SanFilippo. "Success doesn't mean making a profit, success means being self-sustainable enough to fulfil a social mandate."

The bakery, which opened in 2001, aims to provide immigrants, recovering addicts and people with disabilities with skilled employment and a craft. People trained there often go on to work at other artisanal bakeries.

In other words, says Ubertino, a position here is no McJob.

"It's about more than just making money," he says. "There's a value in doing meaningful work that is therapeutic."

"We don't want you to buy our bread because you feel sorry for us, we want you to buy our bread because it is the best bread in Toronto," adds Ubertino. "By buying this bread, you're also changing people's lives." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

AGENTSOFCHANGE Eleven Torontonians who are building a better city

Putting dreamers on the fast track

Part 1. Big ideas get a big push forward from the Centre for Social Innovation

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
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One wants to retrofit houses to cut down on energy and water waste — for free.

Another is giving kids in Rexdale gaming and coding skills. Yet another has created an emissions-free delivery company.

They are among a host of groups and individuals with ideas that could transform Toronto for the better. And, thanks to the Centre for Social Innovation, that change could come quickly.

The centre has singled out 11 projects for its Agents of Change program, which aims to fast-track the success of projects, and help the people behind them move from idea to impact.

"We call them the dreamers, doers and innovators that want to make Toronto a better place through their own slice of vision of what makes a city liveable," said Chris DuPaul, one of the program organizers.

The year-long program offers work space at the Centre for Social Innovation, where "agents" can lean on the experience of other entrepreneurs. It also connects them with high-level contacts at important institutions, including the David Suzuki Foundation, the developer Westbank and the City of Toronto.

"We afford them the time and space and connections and resources to really make this a more entrenched part of Toronto and allow that person to become the best that they could be," DuPaul said.

For Andray Domise, one of the founders of Techsdale, it's a big opportunity.

"CSI has this excellent track record of incubating organizations," he said. "Once you get associated with the CSI brand there's an air of legitimacy about you. It legitimizes the work we're doing."

That, in turn, will lead to stronger partnerships and support to help Techsdale become a reality.

Techsdale wants to help youth in Rexdale move into tech-industry careers by teaching them to build video games and apps. Its wider goal is to make Toronto's gaming industry more diverse.

Right now, diversity is "inexcusably lacking" both in the industry's work force and in the games it produces, Domise said.

The Centre for Social Innovation's 11 agents of change, along with community partners, are working to make their dreams of a better Toronto reality. CONTRIBUTED

"If the Agents of Change program didn't exist, we would have made it work," he said. "But this makes it so much easier. It's going to happen faster."

The Storefront Theatre's Benjamin Blais and Claire Burns are creating change in Toronto via the arts. KELSEY KUDAK/FOR METRO

Building community through the arts

This is the first in a series of stories exploring how the Centre for Social Innovation's 11 Agents of Change plan to improve Toronto. Each is being set up for a year with tools, ranging from work space to contacts, aimed at turning ideas into reality.

The Storefront Theatre began in pseudo-circus fashion, when a group of thespians and friends morphed derelict Toronto spaces into temporary theatres.

But when Benjamin Blais mounted a production of Wait Until Dark in an old pharmacy with barred windows on the southwest corner of Bloor and Delaware, the collective never left.

As one of the Centre for Social Innovation's Agents of Change, Storefront aims to establish itself as a viable place for the creation and production of art.

CSI will offer legal and bookkeeping help, and Storefront will bolster its community presence through educational workshops and collaborative evenings.

Sing For Your Supper is a perfect example of what the group hopes to build on. The event invites playwrights of all backgrounds to submit scripts, which are then rehearsed, costumed and produced in a single hour by whoever shows up. The evening encourages teamwork and creative improvisation.

Storefront Theatre was founded in 2012 on the basis of inexpensive performance space and a supportive atmosphere for indie playwrights, actors and directors.

For its three founders — Benjamin Blais, Stacey Turner and Claire Burns — becoming Agents of Change gives Storefront Theatre credence and a chance to collaborate with non-theatre groups to build community.

"It's a sense of community that really binds people to live theater," said Blais, who noted Storefront's 70-seat black box is intentionally small and intimate, so that theatergoers feel like they're a part of the production.

After losing costumes, office space and props to a flooded basement last year, Storefront supporters contributed the original cost of the theater space and donated used clothing for costumes, which are housed in Storefront's secondary space above Future Bakery and Cafe in the Annex.

Storefront will eventually use the space as an academy for emerging talent, beginning with a summer workshop to feature and produce works of five new playwrights.

Like all arts programs, Storefront's biggest challenge is money, which leaders plan to combat with an upcoming fundraising campaign.

The money will help pay actors, produce a complete season and give the performance space a facelift, which will help the neighbourhood recognize the space as a theater.

"What's exciting about potential investors is that they'll create a legacy by creating a job market for these artists," Blais said.

KELSEY KUDAK/FOR METRO

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Families and friends rally for imprisoned immigrants

Christie Pits Park. Youth calling for maximum holding time of 90 days, not in maximum-security prisions

GILBERT NGABO
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Monday wasn't exactly Family Day for some Toronto families.

They couldn't spend time with a father, a mother, a sibling or another relative — all immigrants awaiting deportation at a Lindsay, Ont., prison.

A group of young people from Toronto and surrounding areas think that should be changed. About 80 of them came from as far as Peterborough and Guelph on Monday to rally in Christie Pits Park, hoping to raise awareness about what they say are nearly 200 immigrants being held at the Lindsay facility as their cases are decided.

Canada, unlike other countries, has no limit on how long people can be held pending deportation. It's something the protesters want to see changed.

They're calling for a maximum holding time of 90 days and want to make sure people aren't detained in maximum-security prisons like the one in Lindsay.

"There's a real human tragedy in families because of these indefinite detentions," said Syed Hussan, co-ordinator with the End Immigration Detention Network's youth committee.

Quoted

"People are separated from their breadwinners, children waiting for their parents to come home."
Syed Hussan

Emma Warner Chee of Peterborough addresses a crowd of people rallying Monday at Christie Pits Park. GILBERT NGABO/METRO

"Immigration detention is cruel, endless suffering."

The group teamed up with Youth 4 Global Change to highlight the issue. The Toronto rally was followed by a larger demonstration in Lindsay, which included about 20 families of people being held there.

Most of the people imprisoned are former refugee claimants who couldn't get their status approved and are being deported, the group says. There are also cases of people whose legal status in Canada has been withdrawn after criminal convictions.

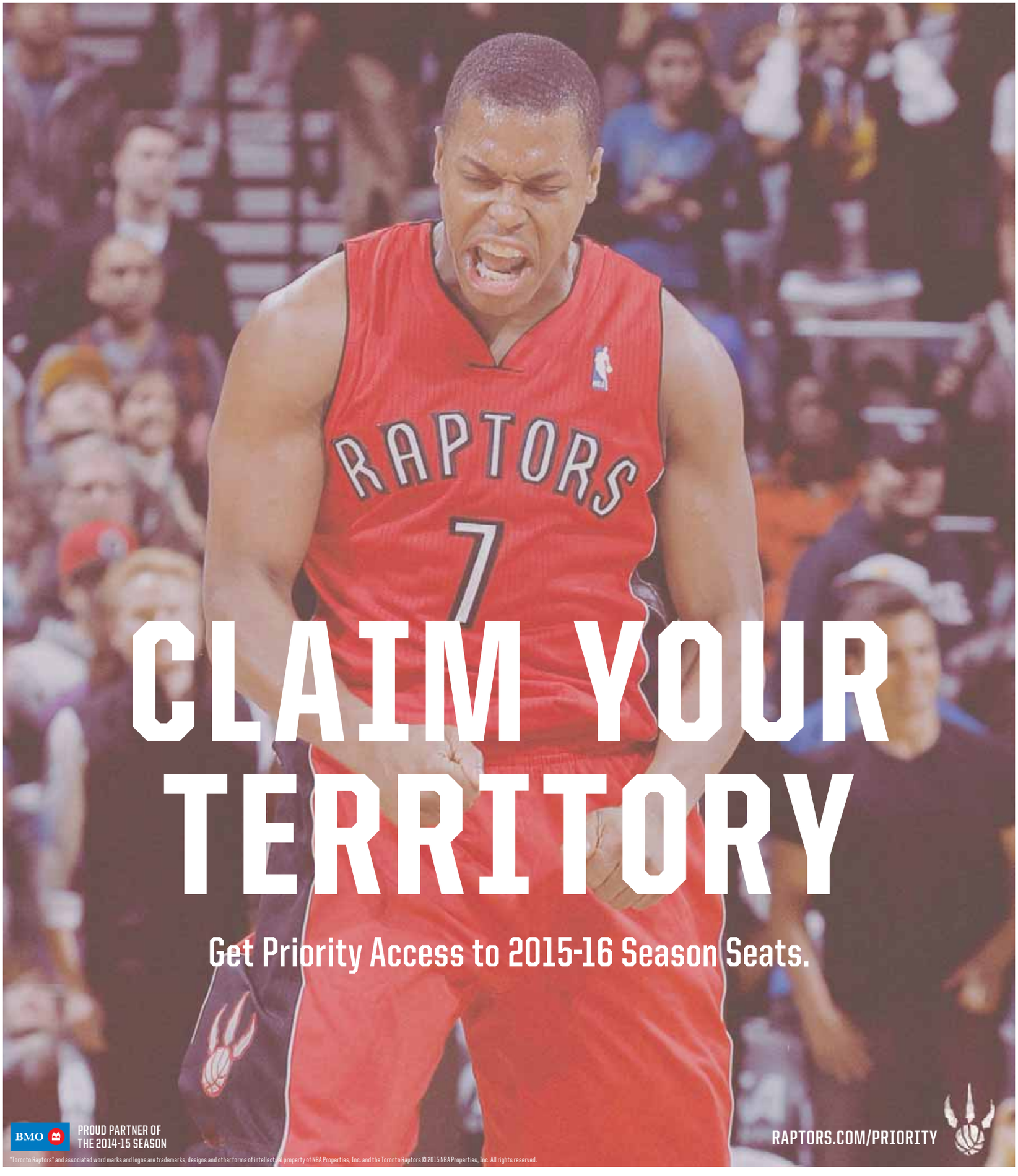
"It's a nightmare to be held without trial or charge," said Emma Warner Chee, 19, one of the rally organizers. "If we get to be with our families on Family Day, so should they."

Immigration

Former refugees lose residency for visiting homeland

Ottawa has slowly — and quietly — stepped up efforts to strip permanent resident status from former refugees who were granted asylum in Canada and later returned to the country where they once faced persecution.

Wielding new powers that came in with changes to immigration law in 2012, the federal government is now actively pursuing reopening asylum files under what's known as a "cessation application" and forcing refugees whose circumstances have changed to leave Canada. An internal document showed the Conservative government has set an annual target of 875 applications to strip refugee status. Advocates say the government initiative has created anxiety and fear among former refugees, who may sometimes travel back to their homeland to visit ailing relatives or visit for longer periods after conditions in the country improve. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



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Low-fat Fat Tuesday — at church

Kensington Market. Anglican minister adapts Shrove Tuesday supper to accommodate vegan, gluten-free diets

LUKE SIMCOE
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Can it still be Fat Tuesday without the fat?

Anglican minister Maggie Helwig and her congregation at St. Stephen in-the-Fields Church in Kensington Market think so.

Since taking over the pulpit two years ago, Helwig has added the option of vegan and gluten-free pancakes to the menu at the church's annual Shrove Tuesday supper.

It's quite a break from tradition. The holiday's association with pancakes stems from early Christians using up leftover eggs and milk before Lent. But Helwig believes giving options to those living less traditional lifestyles makes the church more accessible.

Anglican minister Maggie Helwig, right, her daughter Simone, and her husband Ken Simons will be preparing vegan and gluten-free pancakes tomorrow for their Shrove Tuesday supper at St. Stephen in-the-Fields Church, to makes her church a more "welcoming place." LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

Quoted

"It's kind of taken for granted that if you're in Kensington Market, you have to offer vegan options."
MInister at St. Stephen in-the-Fields Church

"A big part of our identity as a church is being open to whoever wants to come to us," she said.

"We're willing to meet people where they are.

I know there are people in my congregation who are vegan or gluten-free and a regular pancake dinner just wouldn't be welcoming to them."

Although it was Helwig's decision to accommodate different diets, the actual task of cooking the pancakes falls to her husband, Ken Simons, and her 19-year-old daughter, Simone.

Simons has been perfecting his special vegan and gluten-free spin on the classic since last year.

The secret, he says, is using equal parts buckwheat and rice flour. He also uses rice milk because some in the congregation are allergic to soy.

The menu changes have been a hit, Helwig said.

"It's a pleasant little community event," she said. "People get together, make pancakes, eat pancakes and chat."

What's in a name?

Shrove Tuesday gets its name from the verb "shrive," which refers to the act of confession. However, due to its association with food, the holiday is often referred to as Fat Tuesday or even Pancake Day.

Even minister Maggie Helwig admits she grew up thinking "shrove was just another word for pancake."

"I don't particularly say Fat Tuesday. I've always called it Shrove Tuesday, not that anyone ever comes to be shriven, to be honest."

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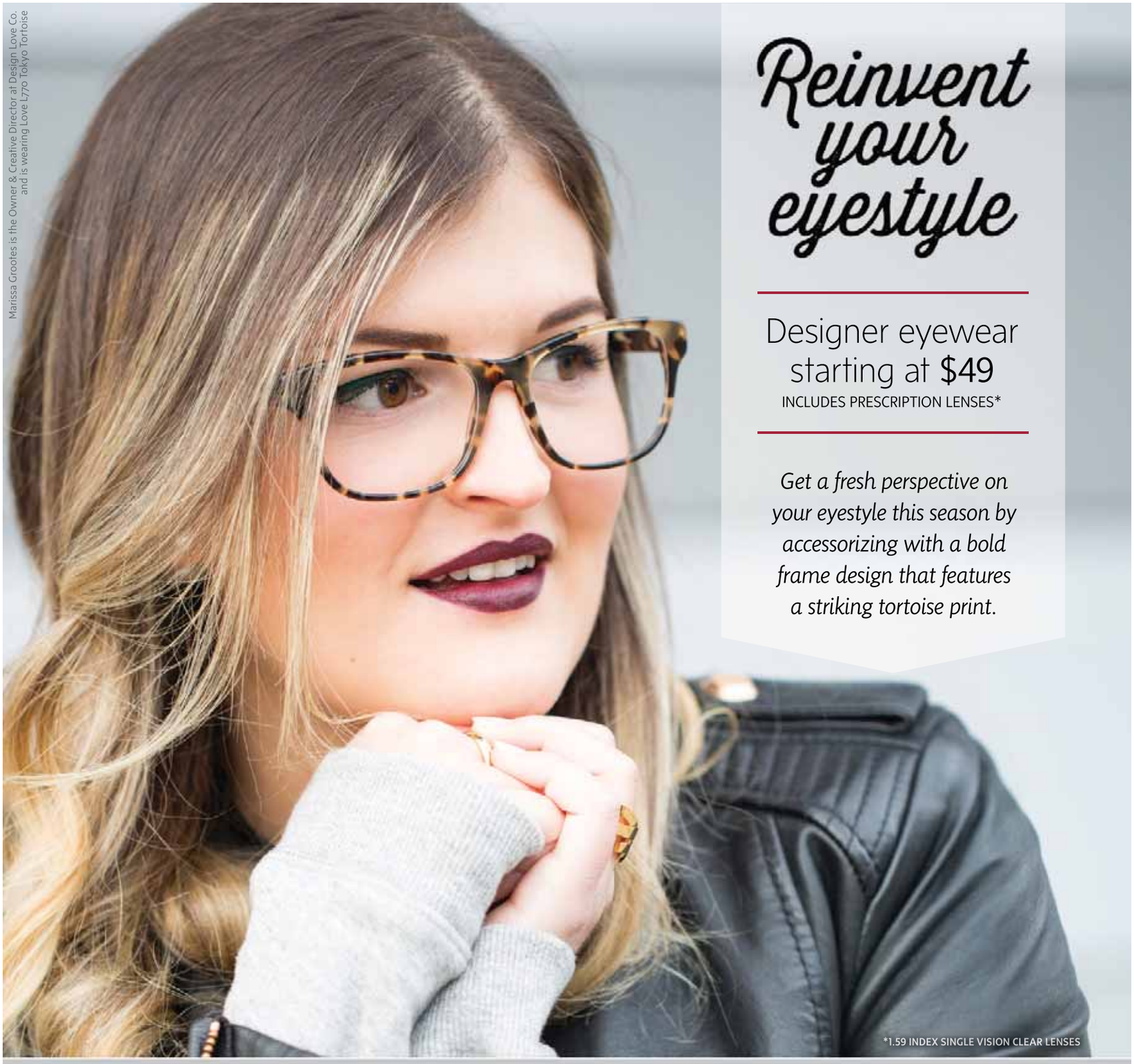
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Part-time soldiers wait up to two years for severance

Nicholas Vanderplas, a former corporal and part-time member of the infantry, says he's used to shoddy paperwork in the army, but waiting nearly two years for $4,500 in severance pay has exhausted his patience.

He is not alone. As of last week, there was a backlog of 2,754 severance payment cases waiting to be processed. And those part-time soldiers who are on the list now, having just left the military, face longer waits than those just a few years ago. According to the department, it takes up to 21 months in some cases to process reservist severance claims through a old, inefficient system the Department of National Defence had promised to fix.

"I am just so disgusted with everything that's been done there," said Vanderplas, 24, of London, Ont., who quit in May 2013 after dislocating his shoulder in a helicopter rappelling exercise. By comparison, members of the regular force waited 18 weeks for severance.

Former military ombudsman Pierre Daigle investigated a series of complaints in the late summer and early fall of 2013 when reservists, unlike full-time counterparts, were waiting between nine and 17 months to receive the stipulated payouts. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Politics

Radio-Canada employees 'hate' conservative values: Harper

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says "a lot" of Radio-Canada employees "hate" conservative values.

Harper says those values that are loathed by many employees of CBC's French-language network are the same ones that he says are supported by many Quebecers. Harper made the comments during a French-language interview with Quebec City radio station FM93, conducted last Friday and aired Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Harper urged to intervene in Mohamed Fahmy's case

Open letter. 250 notable Canadians called on PM to press Egyptian counterpart el-Sissi on journalist's deportation

From left: Comedian Rick Mercer, director Atom Egoyan, and author Michael Ondaatje are shown in these file photos. In an open letter released Monday, 250 notable Canadians — including Mercer, Egoyan, and Ondaatje — urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper to press the case of jailed Canadian-Egyptian journalist Mohamed Fahmy.

PHOTOS: THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE; GETTY IMAGES FILE; STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A number of prominent Canadians are calling on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to intervene "personally and immediately" in the case of a Canadian journalist on trial in Egypt.

In an open letter released Monday, 250 people — including comedian Rick Mercer, filmmaker Atom Egoyan, author Michael Ondaatje and diplomat Stephen Lewis — urged Harper to press his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah el-Sissi on Mohamed Fahmy's case.

Fahmy was released on bail last Friday after spending more than a year in a Cairo prison, but he is set to return to court next week for the continuation of a retrial on terror-related charges his family has called ridiculous.

The letter to Harper calls for the prime minister to ask that Fahmy be allowed to leave Egypt under a new law that allows foreigners convicted or accused of crimes to be deported.

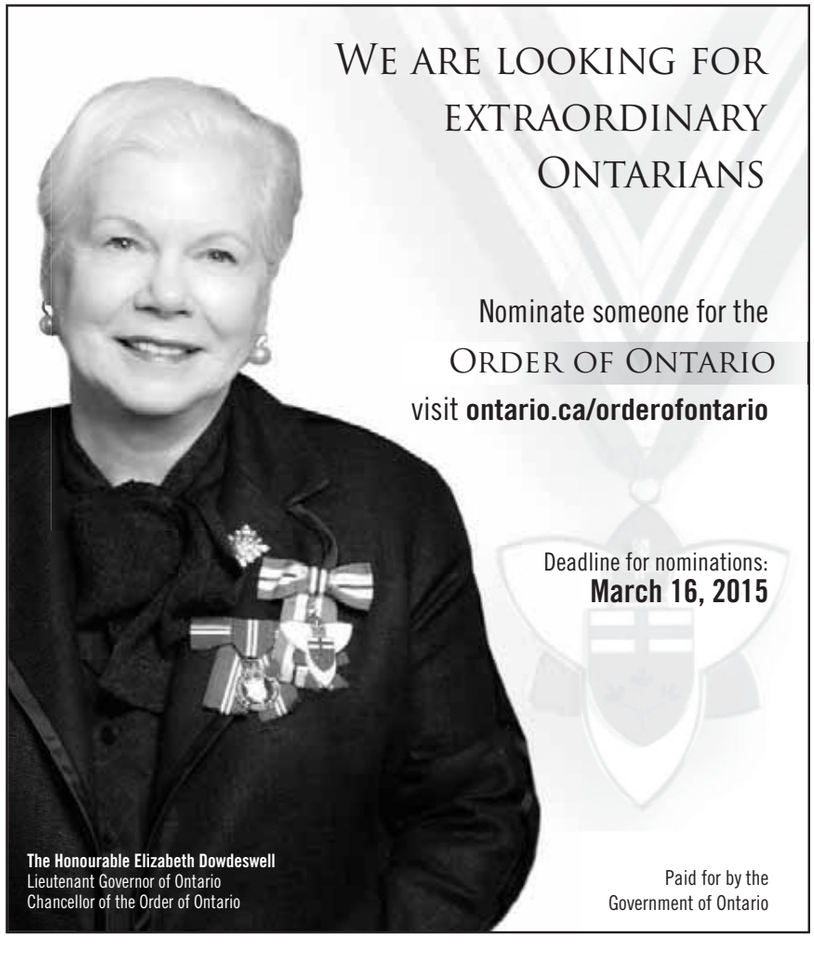
"We the undersigned are writing to urge you to intervene personally and immediately in the case of Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy, who is currently facing retrial in Egypt after 411 days of incarceration," the letter to Harper said.

When Harper was asked by reporters last week if he had spoken directly to the Egyptian president about Fahmy, he would say only that Canada's government has been in contact with Egyptian authorities at all levels, including his level.

Fahmy and his family have criticized the Canadian government for what they see as a lack of adequate action on the case, particularly after Fahmy's Australian colleague was deported from Egypt two weeks ago.

"It's the role of Canada now, they have to show that it's for the national interest of Egypt to deport Mohamed," said Fahmy's fiancée. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Flip to Voices page 16 for Stephen Kimber's column on Mohamed Fahmy.



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Danish sources name gunman

Copenhagen. 22-year-old slain suspect with gang links got out of jail two weeks ago

The slain gunman behind two deadly shooting attacks in Copenhagen was released from jail just two weeks ago and might have become radicalized there last summer, a source close to the Danish terror investigation told The Associated Press on Monday.

Two Danish sources close to the investigation confirmed to the Associated Press that the slain gunman was named Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein. They spoke on condition of anonymity because Copenhagen police have not named the gunman, who they said was a 22-year-old Dane with a history of violence and gang connections. Several Danish media have already named him.

One source told the AP that El-Hussein had been in pre-trial detention for a long time but was released two weeks ago. He also said the corrections authority had alerted Danish security service PET last year after they noticed worrisome changes in El-Hussein's behaviour last summer.

He wouldn't give specifics but said such alerts are issued when inmates change their attitude or behaviour in way that "sets off alarm bells."

PET spokeswoman Lotte Holmstrup declined to comment on the report, saying "we are working on finding out what has happened."

PET director Jens Madsen on Sunday confirmed that the gunman was known to the agency before the weekend attacks in Copenhagen that killed two people and wounded five police officers. He said the gunman may have been inspired by last month's terror attacks by Islamic extremists in Paris that killed 17 people, but did not elaborate on when his agency began tracking him.

The news about the suspected gunman came as Danes mourned the victims of the country's first fatal terror attacks in 30 years — and, in an unusual development, some also put flowers on the street at the spot where police killed El-Hussein. The prime ministers of Denmark and Sweden were expected to join thousands of people at memorials in Copenhagen on Monday evening.

While a Danish court on Monday jailed two suspected accomplices of El-Hussein's for 10 days, Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt insisted there were no signs the gunman had any links to a wider terror cell.

"But we will, of course, in the coming time evaluate our fight against radicalization. We are already doing a lot," she said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Danish terror incidents

- 2012: Three arrested with weapons
- 2010: Four arrested planning shooting; man injured preparing letter bomb; three arrested for planning attack against Jyllands-Posten; Man with axe broke into home of prophet cartoonist, Kurt Westergaard
- 2008: Danish Embassy in Pakistan targeted by car bomb
- 2007: Two arrested conducting test blasts; eight arrested preparing explosives
- 2006: Seven arrested with explosives
- 2005: Four arrested in bomb plot
- 1985: Algerian tourist killed by exploding bomb outside Copenhagen office of the North West Orient airline company

Hundreds of people gather for a vigil near the cultural club in Copenhagen, Denmark, Monday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Uber, Airbnb highlight need for rules: Report

Sharing economy.
As companies move into new territory, governments must react quickly, warns the Mowat Centre

Washington, D.C. taxi drivers protest on Pennsylvania Avenue in June last year, bringing street traffic to a stop as they demand an end to ride-sharing services such as Uber X and Lyft. PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Companies such as Airbnb, Uber and TaskRabbit, which epitomize what's known as the sharing economy, are not going away, so governments must figure out ways to regulate them, a new report says. And that must happen quickly, before such firms become entrenched in their ways.

That's the message from the Mowat Centre, a think-tank at the University of Toronto. Mowat urges policy-makers to recognize that they must step up to protect the public interest, while also ensuring that they don't destroy innovation.

"You have a Wild West situation where people are engaging in transactions and the details haven't been thought out," said Mowat Centre policy director Sunil Johal, who co-authored the report, Policymaking for the Sharing Economy: Beyond Whack-A-Mole, with colleague Noah Zon.

Making cash by renting an apartment or doing an odd job has happened for ages. The difference today is that such activities are "at a scale that blurs the boundaries of the personal and the commercial and threatens to disrupt existing markets and regulatory models," the report says.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CP Rail

Strike ends as both sides agree to resume talks

A day-old strike at Canadian Pacific Railway screeched to an unexpected halt Monday with the company and its union agreeing to binding arbitration just hours before employees were to be legislated back to work.

Labour Minister Kellie Leitch was on the verge of introducing a bill to end the dispute when she suddenly emerged from the House of Commons to reveal the two sides had beaten her to it.

The strike by 3,300 locomotive engineers and other CP train workers began Sunday. Leitch said the strike could have cost the Canadian economy more than $200 million in lost GDP every week.

Earlier, Teamsters union president Douglas Finnson had said crucial issues of driver fatigue and working conditions were best settled through talks. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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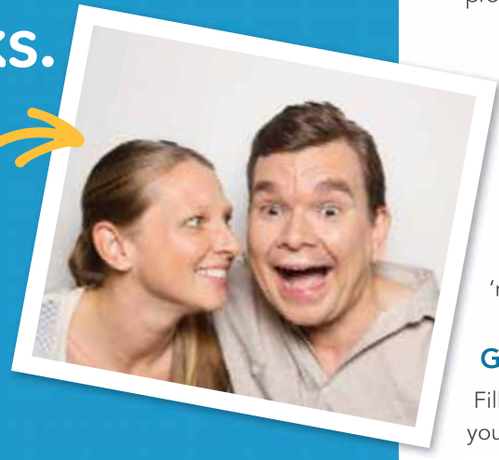

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VOICES

LET'S TEAR DOWN THESE WALLS

The separation between schools and city government doesn't make any sense, since decisions about the former are inextricably linked to outcomes in our communities

TORY'S TORONTO
Matt Elliott

Last week, in the midst of debating local issues such as transit, homelessness and whether Coun. Rob Ford should be kicked out of the room, Toronto City Council spent several slow-moving hours debating something they have virtually no control over — the potential closure of dozens of Toronto District School Board schools that are currently underused.

It's tempting to look at that council debate and get frustrated.

Because, seriously, why are municipal politicians considering an issue beyond municipal powers? Isn't that just a giant waste of time?

Realistically, the most Mayor John Tory and council can do on the question of whether schools close is send a strongly worded letter. The real decision-making will be done by school trustees and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

But there's another way to look at things.

Because behind that useless-seeming debate lie important questions about the way schools are governed in Ontario.

Questions like, hey, is it really right that the people elected to represent neighbourhoods don't have a say over neighbourhood schools?

After all, those schools are more than just buildings where kids go to learn about math, Louis Riel and the flexed-arm hang. For communities, they're also parks and playgrounds. They're soccer and baseball fields. They're daycare centres, meeting spaces and a place to take the dog.

And the decisions councillors make are often inextricably tied to those schools.

New developments are approved based on assumptions about available classroom capacity. Roads and traffic regulations hinge on kids getting places in time for the opening bell. Community centres and youth programs are designed to serve nearby schools.

In that light, it seems almost impossible to separate the issues related to running schools from the issues related to running the city. But our current governance model is set up to maintain separation between the two.

It may be time those walls start to come down.

That doesn't mean that some underused schools shouldn't close. Some should.

And some should be transferred to the city government to become other public spaces.

Nor does it mean that the mayor and city councillors should get to meddle with school curriculum.

All it means is that school governance needs some reform — and that those reforms should include a closer relationship with the people making community-level decisions at city hall.

There was a small motion passed at last week's Toronto council meeting that may serve as a good start. Off a push from Coun. Josh Matlow, council approved the creation of a City-School Boards Advisory Committee. It'll be a more formal place where school trustees and councillors can talk about shared issues.

It's a small thing, but it could be an important step toward building better connections between schools and city government — connections that will, with any luck, prove educational.

Your Toronto

Fire and ice

Photo submitted by Metro reader Mathieu Jacob.

The sun sets beyond the city skyline and an icy Lake Ontario in this shot taken from Polson Pier, near Cherry Beach.

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Mohamed Fahmy

All citizens should have Canada's protection

STEPHEN KIMBER
readers@metronews.ca

Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy sits trapped in Cairo limbo awaiting retrial next week on trumped-up charges he spread "false news" supporting Egypt's outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.

Meanwhile, his Australian colleague, Peter Greste — who was convicted with Fahmy on the same charges last year — is home in Brisbane after being released Feb. 1 from what he calls the "near-death experience" of an Egyptian prison.

Why the difference? The Harper government. So suggests Fahmy himself.

Australia's prime minister, Fahmy told the CBC, spoke directly with Egyptian president Abdel el-Sissi on three occasions, pressing for Greste's release. Harper has refused to confirm whether he's spoken to el-Sissi even once. "We should have a prime minister calling Sissi over the phone," Fahmy said.

Worse, he added, recently resigned Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird played his usual bull-inside-the-diplomatic-china-shop role, insisting publicly during a visit to Cairo last month Fahmy would not face a new trial or further punishment in Canada if released.

But that was exactly the "diplomatic cover" el-Sissi needed to justify releasing Fahmy.

So, instead of following Greste out freedom's door, Fahmy now faces even more prison time. It's not the first time the Harper government — advancing ideological agendas, or simply demonstrating diplomatic deafness — has left Canadians to the un-tender mercies of foreign governments.

Ottawa only reluctantly repatriated Canadian-born child soldier Omar Khadr — the last Western prisoner at the notorious Guantanamo detention camp — after our Supreme Court ruled this country had a "duty to protect" Khadr, whose charter rights were violated. The courts also had to force Ottawa to allow Abousfian Abdelrazik — a Sudanese-born Canadian who'd been cleared of allegations he supported al-Qaida — to return to Canada in 2009. And even though as transport minster John Baird championed the innocence of Bashir Makhtal, a Canadian sentenced to life in prison in Ethiopia for belonging to a terrorist organization, he did little as foreign minister to free him.

Why not? As Makhtal notes, his cousin "is a Muslim-Canadian black man sitting in prison. I hate to admit this, but this is the reality."

So, too, is the reality Canada has chosen human-rights-violating Ethiopia as a "country of focus" for our international aid. Or that we support repressive Egypt on its "aspirational journey to democracy."

Last week, Canada changed foreign ministers. Now we need to change foreign policy. All Canadians, including Mohamed Fahmy, deserve to know their country will support them when they need it most.

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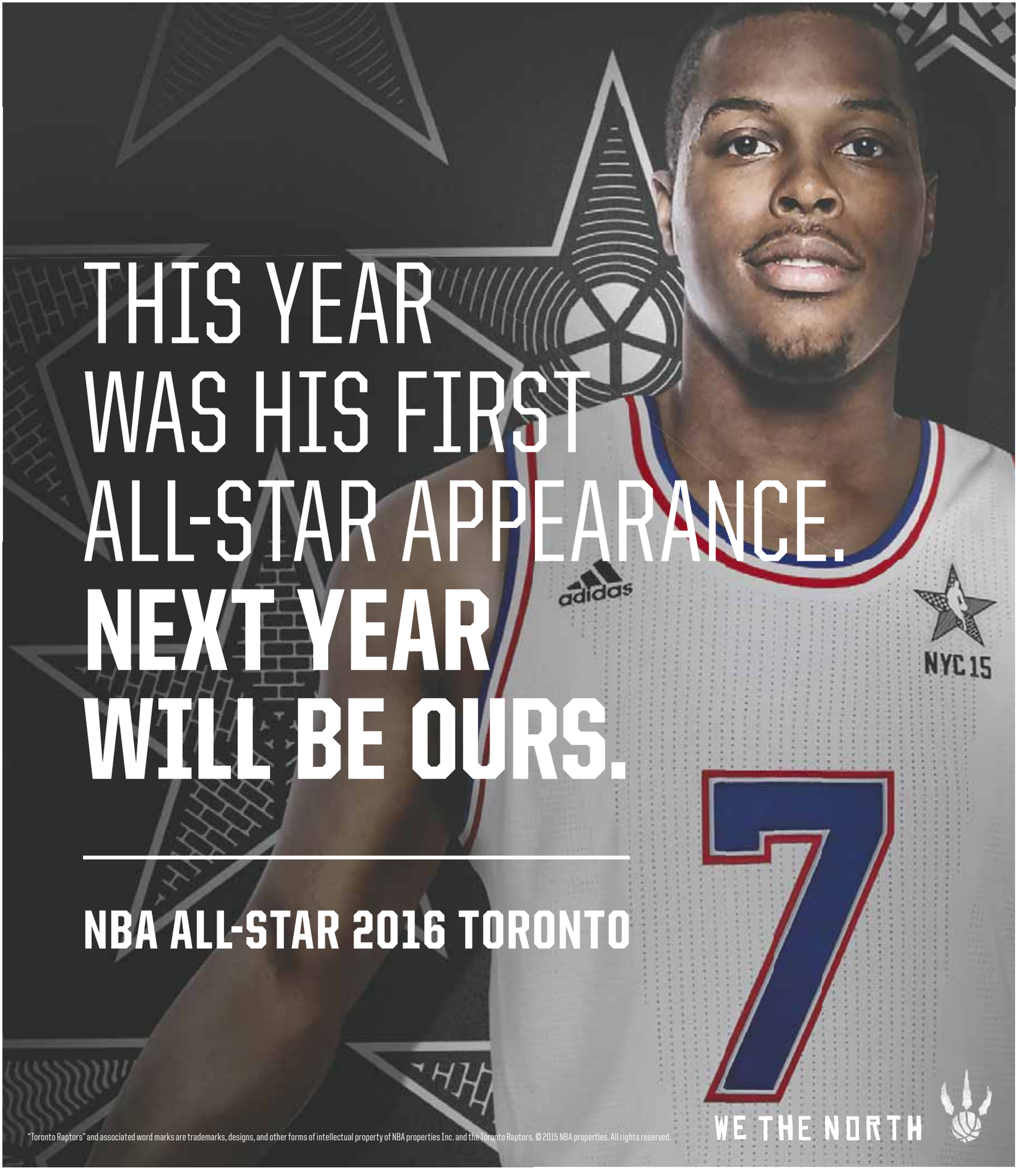
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Rita Ora, left, and Tegan & Sara (Sara Quin pictured here) will be performing at the Academy Awards on Sunday. ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

The Academy Awards set to be a sonic affair

Preview. Oscar show looks more like the Grammys with a number of big musical acts performing

Lady Gaga. Jennifer Hudson. Common and John Legend. Adam Levine. Rita Ora. Tegan & Sara. Tim McGraw.

This isn't the lineup for an upcoming pop concert, but rather for Sunday's Academy Awards.

"We want to entertain," said Neil Meron, producing his third consecutive Oscar ceremony with Craig Zadan. "And there's no better entertainment than to do it with music."

Host Neil Patrick Harris will perform an original song by the Oscar-winning writers behind Let It Go, the producers said. Called Moving Pictures, the musical number will set a "subliminal theme" for the evening, Meron said.

"It really is celebratory about movies and yet it's kind of cheeky in a way," he said. "But yet it has a beautiful musical motif which ... we integrate throughout the show as kind of a call-back theme."

Added Zadan: "We didn't want to do a musical number that could have been on the Tonys, or anywhere else for that matter."

"It's a multimedia musical number," he said, "something that we've not done before."

Music is part of the production pair's professional DNA, though. Meron and Zadan produced the The Sound of Music and Peter Pan live TV specials,

John Legend will perform with Common at the Oscars.

as well as the movie musicals Hairspray and Chicago, which won the best picture Oscar in 2003.

The producers said they started booking musical acts even before they learned the year's nominees. But they were delighted with the nominated original songs.

"We were smiled upon in that respect," Meron said.

A spate of stars will bring those songs to life on the Oscar stage.

Common and Legend are set to perform their song, Glory, from Selma. Levine will sing Lost Stars from Begin Again. Ora will take on Diane Warren's song from Beyond the Lights, Grateful. Tegan & Sara will join with The Lonely Island for The Lego Movie song, Everything is Awesome. McGraw will perform Glen Campbell's song I'm Not Gonna Miss You, from the documentary about his struggle with Alzheimer's, Glen Campbell... I'll Be Me.

The producers wouldn't say what Hudson, Gaga and other entertainers, including Jack Black and Anna Kendrick, will sing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fashion Week

Pregnant Coco Rocha glows in NYC

Coco Rocha's baby bump has caught up with the limelight and the proud supermodel mama couldn't be happier.

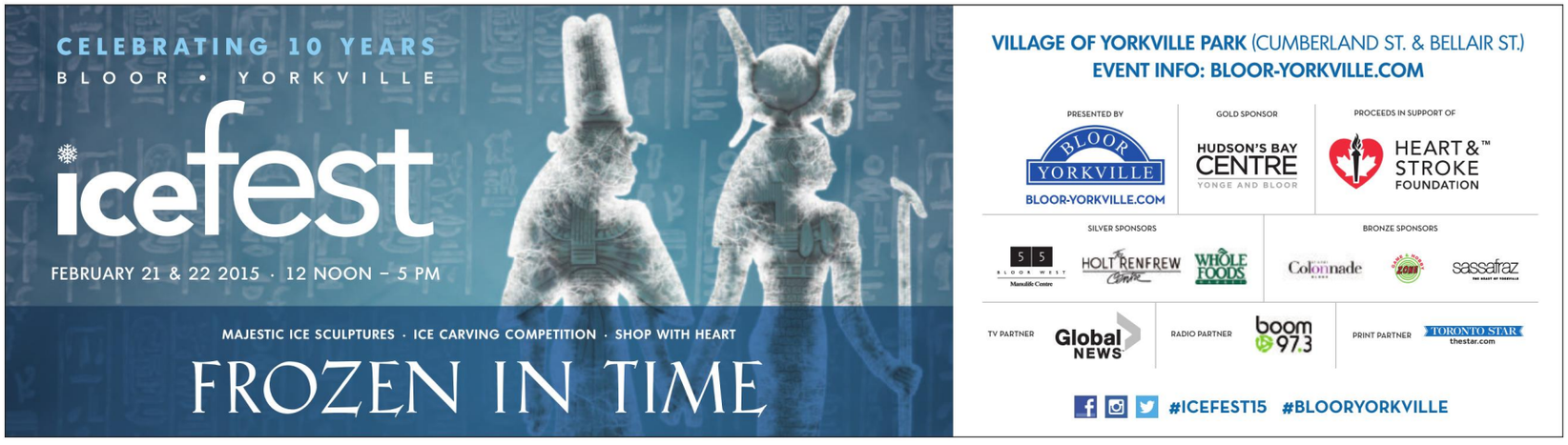
The Canadian redheaded beauty is attending multiple shows at this year's New York Fashion Week, posing for cameras and chatting about her spring arrival — a girl. "I'm not hiding. I'm so excited. It took a while for the bump to show so now that it's showing, it's been fun," a beaming Rocha said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Coco Rocha THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gossip

Nicki Minaj and Meek Mill caught canoodling

Nicki Minaj and rapper Meek Mill were spotted sitting together courtside during the NBA All-Star game Saturday Night at Barclay's Center in Brooklyn, and again during the All-Star game at Madison Square Garden. Are they dating? We can't say for sure, but, by the look on their faces, they look like they were having themselves a good ol' time. Love was definitely in the air. LENYON WHITAKER/ METRO IN NEW YORK



All they could do was say Geronimo

New album. Aussie band Sheppard took a leap of faith and it's paying off in big ways

EMILY LAURENCE
Metro World News in New York

Sheppard is embarking on a North American tour and getting ready to release their album on March 10. GETTY IMAGES

Concert date

Sheppard plays the Phoenix Concert Theatre in Toronto on March 6.

It may seem like Australian band Sheppard came out of nowhere with their massive hit Geronimo (which has been in the Top 20 in over 20 countries and streamed more than 85 million times on Spotify), but in actuality, it's been quite a long haul.

"We wrote Geronimo a year-and-a-half ago now," band member George Sheppard tells us.

"It had its own legs in Australia and Europe, and now the U.S. is finally coming on board. It definitely doesn't feel like it came out of nowhere for us!"

We caught up with Sheppard to talk more about the band's album, Bombs Away, (out March 10) and their North American tour — some stops will also feature Meghan Trainor.

Big risks, big payoffs

Geronimo is about taking a risk in a relationship by starting things up again with an ex, but Sheppard says it has an underlying theme of not being afraid to take chances.

"Without risks, there's no reward, so make that leap of faith," he says. This has been somewhat of a theme for the six band members. "Being in a band in itself is taking a risk," Sheppard says. "There are no guarantees or a safety net. It's pretty risky, but we did it anyway." For his part, Sheppard never really had a plan B. "I cannot explain to you how much I loathed being at university," he says. "(The thought of) four more years of assignments and exams got me really depressed and I just couldn't handle it."

Instead, he, and the other five members of the band — two of whom are his sisters — decided to pursue music full time.

Learning on the road

For his part, Sheppard has never looked back. "(Pursuing music) has given me the opportunity to truly express myself, see the world and meet all sorts of different people who are at the top of their field," he says.

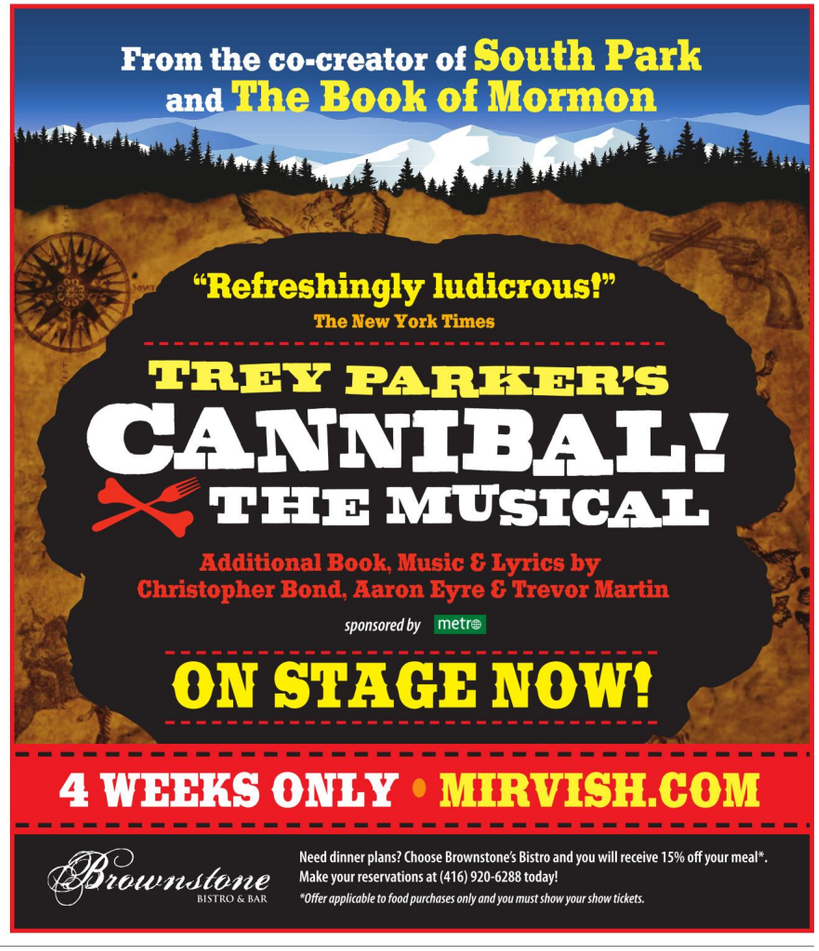
"Sitting in the classroom and reading lines of text, you can only learn so much, but it's when you get out there in the world and really experience it for yourself that's the real classroom. And that applies to any vocation."

Happy sad songs

That said, the next lessons the band will learn will be on the road with tour buddy Meghan Trainor.

Like Trainor, the band is known for their playful, upbeat songs, but don't be fooled by the ever-present happy melodies, some of the lyrics off the new album are actually quite sad. "We wrote a song called Let Me Down Easy, which kind of started that juxtaposition of lyrics and music. We found it interesting, but didn't really think of a conscious decision to do that. But that seems to be what happens," Sheppard explains.

Whether they're singing about breakups or new relationships, it's still bound to be one heck of a party.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Music

Finding Bono

SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

The gates of Bono's house. ALAN CROSS

The man behind the counter at an Irish tourist office in central Dublin gave me a puzzled look.

"A what now walk?"

"A U2 walk. A guided tour of the U2 sites of Dublin."

He paused, looking even more confused. "Why wouldja wanna do that?"

So began my search for U2. You can walk all over Dublin for days without seeing anything that indicates the world's biggest band lives here. Sure, you can find the odd artifact. One of the Trabants used in the lighting rig for the ZooTV tour is hanging upside down in the Hard Rock Cafe. There's the graffiti on the exterior walls of U2's Windmill Lane Studios. And if you look hard in the tiny shops off Grafton Street, you might find a caricature portrait of the band selling for a couple of euros.

The band barely exists in their hometown. Walk onto the grounds on Mount Temple School and the only musical mention in sight is of an Elvis review being staged by the students. The Clarence, the hotel U2 owns in Temple Bar, bears no mark of its famous owners. The only musical thing I could find in the whole place was a miniature statue of Thin Lizzy's Phil Lynott standing next to the whiskey bottles in the Octagon Bar.

Other musicians are proudly celebrated. Rory Gallagher has a street corner named after him, with one of his guitars hanging high on a wall. There's an alley in Temple Bar with giant artistic renderings of the Pogues, Sinead O'Connor and the aforementioned Lynott.

But U2? Ghosts. Well, almost. You might run across "Bono is a pox" graffiti which appears randomly on walls throughout the Republic, left by people who are unhappy with U2's moves to dodge paying taxes in Ireland.

If you're a fan visiting Dublin and want to see all the U2 landmarks, best do all your homework before you boarding the plane.

I thought about asking Bono about this when I drove up to the gate of his house in the Dublin suburb of Killiney, but he didn't answer the door. Funny, that.

Murphy goes for grooves, not laughs, with reggae song

Interview. Comedian Eddie Murphy had a hit in 1985 with Party All the Time, 30 years later he's released a new single, Oh Jah Jah

Eddie Murphy's new release is called Oh Jah Jah. GETTY

Why the long wait before you released something new?
I wasn't waiting. I was just recording stuff. I stopped putting stuff out in the '80s because it was like a bunch of actors putting albums out. So I just kept writing my stuff and doing my stuff privately because I had no pressure and no expectations.

Will there be an upcoming album or collaborations?
I have collaborations with all kinds of different artists over the years. Stuff with B.B. King, I've recorded with Paul McCartney, Snoop, ... Raphael Saadiq. As far as future collaborations, that all has to come together organically. As far as an album coming out, if one of these tracks jumps off and I get some momentum going, I'll put an album, but I'm not planning an album until I'm sure people want to hear something.

If you were to release a reggae album, would you put it out as Eddie Murphy or would you think of a reggae name?
I've got 25 years of stuff on the shelf. I could go right now and pick six, seven, eight reggae songs and put out a reggae album. I've had people say, "You should put a record out because it's a good song and if they didn't know it was you, they'd like it under a different name," but, hey, these are my tracks and I'm not hiding behind any of it.

Any upcoming film projects?
I just finished a movie. It's not a comedy, though. It's called Cook and it's got a really strong director, the guy that directed Driving Miss Daisy and Tender Mercies, a guy named Bruce Beresford.

Any plans on returning to standup comedy?
When I was doing standup, it was a 100 comedians, now it's a 100,000 of them. So if I got onstage again, I'd have to be doing something that makes me different from all these other 100,000 comics. My fantasy when I think about live performances is a band playing a half-hour or 40 minutes of music and having the curtains go down then doing an hour of standup comedy. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Taylor takes New York, Brad won't boost Manitoba

Destinations are carefully cultivating relationships with celebrities whose fans are seen as potential visitors. But the connection between famous people and the places they promote is not always obvious. Celebs have always endorsed products, but it's easier to appear in an ad for a credit card than to represent a place you don't know much about. And that's when things get interesting.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taylor Swift, New York City

New York City tourism officials took some guff when Taylor Swift became the city's global welcome ambassador last fall. Critics said she was a bland, inauthentic representative for a city known for bagels, hip hop and opinionated locals. City officials said it was a great way for New York to woo Swift's millennial fans.

Tori Spelling, Newport Beach

In 2012, actress Tori Spelling was hired to connect Newport Beach, Calif., to her Twitter followers. She didn't have to visit Newport Beach or say anything special about it. But she did tweet photos and links as part of a tourism giveaway in a campaign organized by IZEA, a firm that helps connect social media influencers and destinations.

Brad Pitt, Manitoba

Another unlikely partnership was floated in a spoof claiming Manitoba tourism had spent $1 million to recruit Brad Pitt. The item, which ran last fall on the CBC's This is That program, suggested Manitoba might get "international recognition" if Pitt were to mention the province "in an interview with a Hollywood magazine or website." The joke led to inquiries from folks who didn't realize it was satire.

Chris Noth, Hong Kong

A recent visit to Hong Kong by actor Chris Noth of Sex and the City and Good Wife fame led tourism officials there to say in an email that Noth could help Hong Kong target "achievers in New York."

Cristiano Ronaldo, Portugal

Some campaigns do employ locals. Turismo de Portugal works with mega soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo to promote his native Portugal in China, where he's known as C Luo. His picture appears on posters with messages in Chinese that Portugal is "world famous" and "full of spectacular places."

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So you want to run a marathon

Training. Now is the time to prepare for major running events happening this spring

EVA KIS
Metro News in New York City

Pumped up from watching marathons and thinking you can conquer the course this year?

The can-do attitude is a good start, but you're going to need some guidance — not to mention encouragement.

To get started, be as scientific as possible in your training, advises Josh "Speedy" Maio, head coach of the running program at Paragon Sports in Manhattan.

"Test, test, test and test again, eliminating as many variables as you can to achieve optimum results," he says.

That includes figuring out what gear, clothing materials and food is for you.

"You'll want to track your eating habits heading into, during and after your long runs so you know exactly what works for you and your body."

All that experimenting — sport is a science, after all — will help get you race-ready in body and mind.

"As you hone everything, this will help you relax a little bit because you know everything you are using and are doing for your race works," Maio says. "It's amazing what that little bit of stress relief can do for you."

We asked Maio to start the countdown to your training for the big event in 2015.

Three reasons to run with a group

Distraction: "When you are training for a marathon, you can find yourself running a lot of miles alone, and those miles can get very tough. Having people to talk to and distract your brain from what your body has to do can make those miles just melt away without feeling half as gruelling as they can."

Focus: "We all have speed, tempo and hill workouts to do during our training cycles, and these are all things we lament having to do. Nobody likes doing them, but having a group to battle through them with makes them much more bearable and, dare I say it, pleasant."

Accountability: "The group keeps you honest. You become 'accountabilibuddies' that motivate, support and push you towards your ultimate goal."

Two ways a specialty running store can help

Expertise: "Running specialists are involved in (your local) running community and can offer advice and recommendations from personal experience."

The right fit: "Most running footwear is separated into two categories: neutral and stability. Running specialists are trained to help runners determine their gait before they choose the type of running shoes that best fits them."

Mind the App

A calorie counter that talks back

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This talking calorie counter will help you track your food consumption and workouts with helpful feedback and darkly humorous "punishments" when you overindulge. Not as accurate as it is amusing. It may even call you a "meatbag" for your naughty choices.

MIND THE APP
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@RealKrisAbel
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Wearables do little to change behaviour, researchers find

Technology. Tracking devices may be popular, but new study questions how much impact they have on users' health

Gadget fatigue, tracking accuracy and effectiveness of data reporting are among the reasons users are abandoning wearable tracking devices. ISTOCK

Despite their growing popularity and a burgeoning market, wearable tracking devices aren't likely to change behaviour, according to a report from the University of Pennsylvania.

A tremendous gap exists between recording data and changing behaviour, according to the team, with little evidence to say it could be bridged, or even narrowed, despite increasing popularity.

Authors Mitesh S. Patel and Kevin G. Volpp surveyed 6,223 wearable users and found that more than half of them had ceased to merit that title.

Of the more than 50 per cent who had given up on their wearable, two thirds of them had done so within the first six months after purchasing it.

Patel and Volpp traced these dismal stats to four categories of reasons as to why wearables are failing their customers: price, fatigue of the gadget itself, accuracy in tracking and effectiveness of data reporting methods.

Of price, the researchers say that wearables appeal to those who need them least, for their survey revealed wearable users to be of a young, high-earning demographic who described themselves as early adopters of technology. Patel and Volpp applauded efforts by employers and insurers to make wearables available to those who have the most to gain from the experience.

Of the gadget itself, the researchers say the additional steps it implies can be just too bothersome for those who may have a difficult time already. To save time spent syncing, charging and connecting, it could be best to stick to smartphones.

They question the accuracy of newer functions in trackers like sleep and heart rate and say devices should take a more direct approach, such as connecting to an actual medicine bottle instead of hiding dosage information in an app. AFP

By the numbers

50%

More than half of the 6,223 wearable users surveyed by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania had given up on their tracking device.

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Smoking. Trying to quit? If you're female, then biology may be working against you

There are a lot of things that revolve around our visits from Aunt Flo, ladies. But apparently, the list is even longer if you're trying to quit smoking.

According to a University of Montreal study, chocolate is not the only thing you crave like clockwork. "Our data reveal that (uncontrollable) urges to smoke are stronger at the beginning of the follicular phase that begins after menstruation," says psychiatry professor Adrianna Mendrek.

As estrogen and progesterone levels drop, they start a vicious cycle of withdrawal symptoms and "increase activity of neural circuits associated with craving," she says. Mendrek believes that quitting could be easier for women after ovulation, when both those hormones are flowing freely.

But the solution is not as simple as timing. Fewer than one in 10 smokers who quit remain smoke-free after a year, and women have a harder time quitting than men.

EVA KIS/METRO IN NEW YORK CITY

Women may find it easier to stop smoking after ovulation, according to researchers. ISTOCK

†Subject to credit approval. To be eligible, patients must complete the Custom LASIK procedure on both eyes by March 31, 2015. Cannot be combined with any other offer or discount. *Prices are subject to change without prior notice and vary based on prescription strength. Applicable on a procedure for both eyes only. Other conditions may apply.

New in produce

Cruising for a non-bruising: Apples

Two types of apples genetically modified to resist turning brown after they're bruised or sliced could be coming to your local grocery store.

The development could boost sales of apples for snacks, salads and other uses. The U.S. Agriculture Department gave its OK on Friday.

Arctic Golden and Arctic Granny Smith are being developed by a Canadian company, Okanagan Specialty Fruits Inc. of Summerland, B.C. The first Arctic apples are expected to be available in late 2016.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Communication

All humans love happy talk: Study

All human language is partial to positive words, according to researchers at the University of Vermont who conducted a study in which they analyzed Arabic movie subtitles, Russian novels, English lyrics and Korean tweets, to name a few sources.

"We looked at 10 languages," says co-author Peter Dodds, "and in every source we looked at, people use more positive words than negative ones."

Their findings confirm the 1969 Pollyanna Hypothesis, which found a universal trend of selecting more positive words than negative ones for communication, suggesting that humans are innately optimistic. AFP

Stores out to get you all shopped up

Tighten those purse strings. Understanding retailers' tricks will keep you from spending more

GAIL VAZ-OXLADE
Gail blogs daily at gailvazoxlade.com

Buyer beware: Those cute front-of-store items are designed to soften you up for a much bigger spending spree. ISTOCK

Sometimes the key to not spending money is understanding just how much you're being manipulated into opening up your wallet.

Did you know that supermarkets and restaurants use slower music to create a relaxed atmosphere? In the supermarket this has the effect of slowing the traffic flow so that you end up shopping for longer and spending more. In a restaurant, you relax, taking more time to eat and drink, hiking your bill.

Your ears aren't the only things being tuned to get you to spend more money. Your nose is another gateway into your wallet.

According to the Journal of Consumer Research, in one experiment, the aroma of cookies influenced women to spend more on clothing. Go figure. Now we're going to have to walk around with clothespins on our noses to get out of the store with our budgets intact.

The compromise effect

And for all you comparison shoppers out there, retailers know how to pull your strings too.

Marketers know that we shrink from buying either the highest- or lowest-priced stuff. We default to the price in the middle. This is called the "compromise effect," and it's a major predictor of how we buy. Companies rely on it to increase sales of their most profitable items.

That's why the salesperson at the TV store, car store or shoe store steers you toward the most expensive options first. They know you're not going to buy them, but they want to establish what "high" is so you feel comfortable with their next offering which is more "in the middle."

Don't even get me started with "free" or "BOGO." Almost no one can resist the word "free."

Even when you're encouraged to spend extra money — "Buy $50 worth of stuff and get this thing you didn't really want or need for free" — the carrot being dangled is so persuasive that the free-with-purchase moves you to dig deeper into your wallet. And Buy-One-Get-One has become synonymous with free even when it isn't.

So now retailers offer BOGO-at-half-price, (a measly 25 per cent off), and we rush to make the deal.

Turns out shopping is a two-stage process

Ever notice how sometimes when you go shopping for one thing, you end up bringing home four or five other things? How many times have you heard, "I only came in for ..." at the checkout?

Stage 1: People deliberate about a purchase, weighing cost and benefits, the degree to which they need the item, and so on.

Stage 2: Once the deliberation is over and the buying begins, a subtle psychological mechanism comes into play and a roller coaster of shopping can begin.

That first buy creates what the researchers call "shopping momentum."

Most people don't have a clue that this is happening to them. Outside stores, people think rationally. Inside stores, we're triggered to shop more by the sheer act of shopping. That's why smart stores put momentum starters at the front of the store: You know, those small items it's easy to pick up, which don't require a lot of deliberation and are relatively inexpensive.

Those little buys get you on a shopping roll. It's also why smart retailers use products they sell at a deep discount to get you into the store.

Can you overcome shopping momentum?

You betcha. When you open two separate wallets, envelopes or other containers for your money, you're more likely to think twice before jumping on the shopping bandwagon.

So put the cash you intend to spend into separate envelopes, and write your list on the front, before heading off to the store. You're less likely to dip back into your wallet for impulse purchases.

If you know the stuff layered around the cash register is designed to encourage impulse purchases, you'll know enough not to touch the stuff. And if you know your senses can be turned against you, you'll always shop with a list so you stay on track.

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Shopping study

Stanford University did some studies about how shopping can lead to more shopping. It seems that buying that fateful first item sets you on a shopping track that can end with you spending far more than you planned.

- In an experiment, people were given the opportunity to buy discounted items from the researchers as compensation for their participation in the study.
- Some people were offered a light bulb; others received something more relevant to their needs like an educational CD. This was to vary how likely people were to buy the first item.
- It came as no surprise that people who were offered a light bulb were less likely to buy it than those offered the CD. Then folks had the chance to buy a second item: a keychain.
- The people who bought the CD — something they wanted — were more likely to buy the keychain even though the second item was completely unrelated to the first.

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Nutri-Bites

Pancakes for dinner — it's a Shrove thing

NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Pancake Tuesday! Oh, how I loved it as a kid, and I'm sure my mom did, too — what could be easier than pancakes for supper? But why pancakes, and why on Tuesday?

Shrove Tuesday was turned into Pancake Tuesday by the Brits. Shrove comes from the word "shrive" which is a Christian process of presenting oneself for confession, penance and absolution. It is performed on the day before Lent begins (Ash Wednesday) when some pleasure must be given up for the six-week duration. Originally, that "pleasure" was any form of fat, and so became "Fat Tuesday" or Mardi (Tuesday) Gras (Fat).

And, if you are going to give something up, goes the thinking, you must gorge upon it in advance. So as not to waste, you see. Pancakes use up all the eggs and butter, so it only makes sense that they would come to represent this holy day. (Not really, but since it's the way things are, let's make the best of it)!

Pancakes don't have to be boring. Here are some new ways to spruce them up:

- **Go savoury and spread on some hummus. Then you can slip in a salad.**
- **Use canned pumpkin and cinnamon in your mix to bump up the vitamin A and fibre. You'll need less sweet stuff on top, too.**
- **Add nuts to a gluten-free pancake and be super virtuous.**
- **Top pancakes with grated parmesan cheese before you flip and make a crispy foundation for fried apples.**
- **Top wet pancake with crunchy granola and add hemp seeds for more protein before flipping.**

Coconut makes a light pancake

Pancake Tuesday.
Easy, gluten-free protein pancakes stack up to a healthy way to celebrate the day

Coconut flour is not only gluten-free, it is high in fibre and good fat.

Despite its health benefits, you would think it would be dense and heavy like almond flour or others but it is quite light and fluffy.

It does have a vague coconut taste but that can be disguised if you are one of the few who doesn't enjoy that.

My Nutri-Bites column at left has ideas on how to dress up simple pancakes.

This recipe makes four servings. Serve pancakes with fresh berries and your favourite topping. ISTOCK

Ingredients

- 2 egg whites
- 1 cup coconut flour
- 3 whole large eggs
- ¼ cup milk (or alternative)
- Pinch cinnamon
- Coconut oil for frying

Directions

1. Whisk egg whites in a blender until they are fluffy and no longer liquid.
2. Gently blend in coconut flour on low.
3. Whisk whole eggs, milk and cinnamon together and blend into batter.
4. Thin with more milk one tablespoon at a time until it is the consistency of egg nog.
5. Preheat a pan over medium high heat and add coconut oil.
6. Pour batter into pan to create 3- to 4-inch disks and cook until you see a few bubbles.
7. Flip once and remove.
8. Continue with remaining batter, wiping pan with coconut oil in between.

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Getting a job if you have a disability can be easier than you might think if you know where to look.

Today, companies want to be more inclusive of the Canadian workforce and more reflective of the customers that they serve.

My experience as an employment specialist has shown me that companies often don't know where to go to find diverse talent. Recent graduates with disabilities are often afraid to apply for their ideal positions for fear of discrimination through the recruitment process without realizing those employers may be seeking someone with precisely their profile. Below are a few tips for finding employers committed to recruiting and retaining diverse talent.

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) partnerships

Identifying employers that sponsor, partner with and/or support organizations and associations committed to D&I is one way to know if an employer is inclusive. Such employers typically have a culture that is open, accommodating, and values diversity. Research which employers support these efforts.

There are numerous major Canadian D&I organizations worth checking out. Here are some of my favourites:

- The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI): This organization provides tools and support to employers looking to become more inclusive.
- The Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN): With more than 60 employer partners, their Business Leadership Network consists of more than 30 employers who are committed to promoting the hiring of persons with disabilities.
- Canadian Business SenseAbility: A national organization run by private-sector business leaders aiming to accelerate business success through the talents of persons with disabilities.

The Google test

When evaluating a company's commitment to D&I, do a simple online search, which can be surprisingly effective.

Companies aren't shy about communicating and promoting their values: They want clients, staff, prospective employees and stakeholders to know their organizational beliefs, goals and commitments.

When attracting the best talent, they want to demonstrate why they are an employer of choice. It's also good for business; people prefer to deal with companies with good cultures and core values.

Searching for the employer 'name + diversity + Canada' gives a pretty good overview of their commitment level.

Check their website to see if they have a diversity section, learn about inclusive practices, what causes they support and their current initiatives.

Companies that support inclusive hiring will make an effort to highlight this on a diversity page.

Major conferences and job fairs

Participation and support of diversity and inclusion events are great indicators of the level of inclusiveness at a particular company. Companies attend these events because it is important to their values.

- At recruiting sessions, they are looking for diverse talent. Here you can meet and network with individuals responsible for recruitment initiatives to promote inclusion at their organizations. At conferences and seminars advocating for inclusive practices, you can connect with employers, who support these initiatives.
- You can also follow organizations committed to D&I on Twitter and LinkedIn and join their mailing lists to ensure you don't miss out on any upcoming events.

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SPORTS 4

No players are off limits in Leafs' dealings: Nonis

NHL. Buds GM keeping options open with trade deadline less than two weeks away

Defenceman Morgan Rielly, 20, maybe the closest thing the Maple Leafs have to an "untouchable" as the team is looking to put together a new core of young talent. GETTY IMAGES FILE

No one is "untouchable" as the Toronto Maple Leafs embark on a rebuilding project that could see a major roster turnover.

General manager Dave Nonis began the de-construction of the Leafs on Sunday by trading Cody Franson and Mike Santorelli to the Nashville Predators. It's the first move to cash in ahead of the March 2 trade deadline and the first of many that will be made before the 2015-16 Leafs gather for training camp.

"We're going to make moves whenever they come about that we think can help us," said Nonis, whose future is in doubt with the Leafs headed toward their second straight season without a playoff appearance.

"Whether there's a lot more between now and the deadline or not, I really couldn't tell you. It's not like we're trying to move out our whole roster; that's not the case.

"But if there are deals that will help us to move the team forward, then we would look to do them."

Forwards Daniel Winnik and David Booth, each on a one-year deal, could be traded within the next two weeks, as could veteran centre Olli Jokinen, acquired from Nashville but likely not long for Toronto.

Jokinen has only six points this season but could be worth something given that his contract is up at the end of the season, especially if the Leafs retain part of his salary to get a deal done.

"Our plans with Olli would be to get him playing, get his game to the highest possible level," Nonis said. "I wouldn't be surprised if there are playoff teams that will be calling us before the 2nd to see if we'd move him."

Even considering the Leafs' recent failures, which include a March 2014 collapse and one this season that cost Randy Carlyle his job, there are plenty of players who could draw interest. Centre Nazem Kadri is a restricted free agent this summer, and core players like Phil Kessel, captain Dion Phaneuf and Joffrey Lupul may be out the door if the organization commits to a long-term rebuild.

No one's off-limits, Nonis said, with perhaps the exception of impressive 20-year-old defenceman Morgan Rielly.

"If we're trying to put together a young group that can grow together and have a chance to win, you'd have a harder time moving the younger players," Nonis said. "For us to move Morgan Rielly right now, unless it was something that makes so much sense in terms of rebuilding a team, you just wouldn't do. I wouldn't say untouchable ... but obviously there's some players that would be very difficult for us to move." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Right now, I am a Maple Leaf and I will approach it day by day."

Olli Jokinen, who was recently acquired in a trade. Toronto GM Dave Nonis said he expects teams to inquire about Jokinen prior to the March 2 NHL trade deadline.

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AHL

Carrick, Marlies edge Senators

Sam Carrick scored his second goal of the game midway through the third period as the Toronto Marlies beat the Binghamton Senators 5-4 in American Hockey League action Monday at Ricoh Coliseum.

Ryan Rupert also had two goals for Toronto, while Josh Leivo also scored.

Cole Schneider, Garrett Thompson, Derek Grant and Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored for the Senators.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lance Armstrong

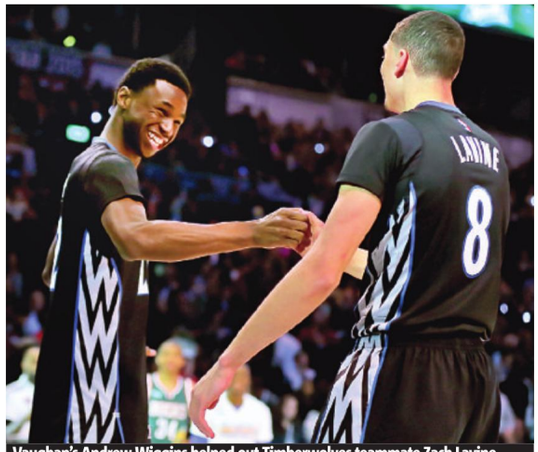
$10M

An arbitration panel ordered Lance Armstrong and Tailwind Sports Corp. to pay $10 million in a fraud dispute with a promotions company for what it called an "unparalleled pageant of international perjury, fraud and conspiracy" that covered up his use of performance-enhancing drugs. Dallas-based SCA Promotions announced the 2-1 decision against the former cyclist when its lawyers said Monday they had asked Texas' 116th Civil District Court in Dallas to confirm the arbitration ruling, dated Feb. 4.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wiggins finding his way with T-Wolves

NBA. Canadian rookie voted MVP in the Rising Stars Challenge game



Vaughan's Andrew Wiggins helped out Timberwolves teammate Zach Lavine during the slam dunk competition on Saturday night in New York. ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

Andrew Wiggins never got the opportunity to suit up with LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers, the team that selected him first overall in last year's NBA draft. He was traded to Minnesota before his rookie season even started.

But he's never looked back.

Had he stayed on Cleveland's star-studded roster, Wiggins knows he wouldn't be getting the same opportunities he's had with Minnesota, where he has quickly proven he has what it takes to be a future superstar in the league.

"There I would have been more of a role player," he said. "Here I'm getting more time to shine."

Wiggins' game has been steadily improving with each NBA month. He's been especially successful in 2015, averaging 19.8 points, 4.6 rebounds and 2.5 assists per game.

Quoted

"I think it was the best move for me."

Andrew Wiggins on going to Minnesota.

He wasn't an all-star on the weekend but he did make his mark in the Rising Stars Challenge at Brooklyn's Barclays Center, scoring 22 points to lead Team World to a 121-112 victory over Team U.S.A. and collecting the game's MVP. He also wowed the crowd by throwing down a few dunks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Down to the final 16

With Europe's top club competition set to resume , here are storylines to watch heading into the Champions League's knockout stage

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Photos by Getty Images

1 Chelsea primed

The contrast between injury-hit Paris Saint-Germain and fully-rested Chelsea could not be greater.

Jose Mourinho's Chelsea benefited from a rare weekend off with the team not involved in FA Cup action.

"I welcome this little rest for the players," said Mourinho.

Even worse for PSG, Chelsea's top scorer Diego Costa will be back after serving a three-game ban.

Bayern back in form

Bayern Munich answered a recent dip in form with an 8-0 hammering of Hamburger SV for the club's biggest Bundesliga win in over 30 years on Saturday.

"I'm happy that we're back to our way of playing," Bayern coach Pep Guardiola said ahead of Tuesday's trip to play Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk.

The game is being played in Lviv due to the deadly conflict in the east of Ukraine.

2 Respite for Ronaldo

Cristiano Ronaldo finds himself in a rare position: The goals are drying up for the Real Madrid star.

The Ballon d'Or winner has not scored in his past three games and has netted just four times in the past 10 — unexpected giving that he started the season with 17 in his first 11.

The good news is that Schalke is the next opponent on Wednesday.

Ronaldo scored four goals when Madrid routed the German side 9-2 on aggregate in the competition last season.

Odd ones out

Basel vs. Porto is the only one of eight pairings without a club from the big three Champions League nations of Spain, England and Germany — and that suits them just fine.

They have just a single quarter-final appearance between them since Porto became European champion for a second time in 2004.

Porto was among just three clubs, with Real Madrid and Chelsea, to advance unbeaten through its group.

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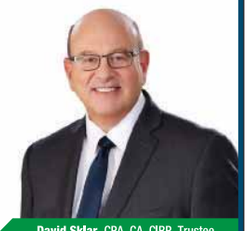

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AUGMENTED REALITY

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Remind yourself that what you are anxious about exists solely in your mind and cannot affect you in the world at large.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
There are times when it pays to be blunt and this is one of them. Others won't mind what kind of language you use today so long as they understand where you are coming from.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You will need to keep a cool head today because something is going to happen that has others running in all directions and getting nowhere fast.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Ignore your critics. The only mistake you made was letting them know what you were planning. Next time keep it to yourself. You can live without their feedback.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Even if you are a bit short cash-wise at the moment the planets indicate you will make good your losses over the next few weeks.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Someone you love will do something today that makes you realize there is a lot about them you still don't understand. Is that such a bad thing? It keeps your relationship interesting.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
The Sun is about to move into the most hard-working area of your chart but that does not mean you have to do everything yourself. Spread the load over the next few days.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
When dealing with people whose motives you are not entirely sure about, make certain what they say and do can't hurt you.

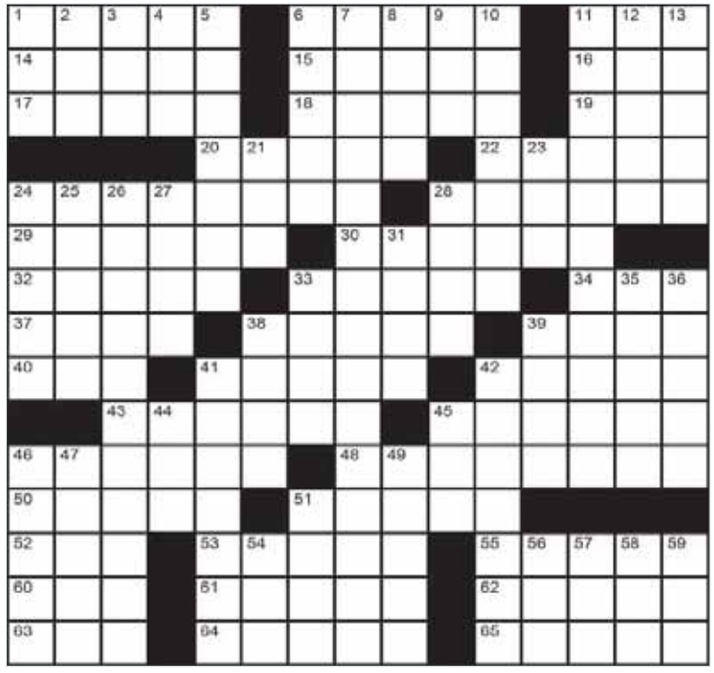
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Minor disagreements could get out of hand today, so promise yourself now that no matter what the provocation might be you won't rise to the bait.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You can blame other people for what has gone wrong but wouldn't it be more honest to look at your own performance first?

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
It's up to you what you do with your cash, of course, but surely you can find something better to spend it on, something that brings long-term benefits to you and yours.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
The Sun's move into your sign tomorrow will bring new challenges and new opportunities. Today, rest while you can.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



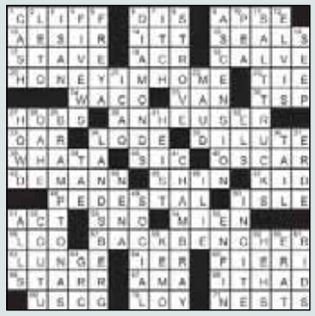
Across

1. Saskatchewan village an hour north of Saskatoon
6. Annul
11. Li'l loudness
14. There __ __ '_' in 'Team'
15. Stage
16. Fuss
17. "__ __ the Moon" (1999) starring Jim Carrey
18. Raring to go
19. Society pages word
20. Academic stretches
22. Accolades
24. Bluegrass song about Tennessee: 2 wds.
28. Compares to
29. "All __!" (Conductor's call)
30. "Oh My Darling Clementine" bit: "... dwelt _ __ forty-niner..."
32. Le __ d'Arthur (King Arthur work by Sir Thomas Malory)
33. Chills
34. Dyson, e.g.
37. Ink implements
38. Female red deer [pl.]
39. Shakespearean verb
40. Compass pt.
41. Divulges
42. Canadian actor Colm
43. Respite
45. Things growing in Quebec forests
46. Invented-in-Canada baby cereal
48. __ de soleil (Sunglasses, in French)
50. Some seals
51. __-__-sac
52. 'I love', in Latin
53. Country singer Travis
55. Old Testament figure
60. Prefix to 'political'
61. Poly's materialistic friend?
62. Music genre, __ Contemporary
63. Western CFL-er, e.g.
64. Mikhail Gorbachev's late wife
65. Dependent

Down

1. Boundary, briefly
2. Conductor, __-Pekka Salonen
3. Heart singer Ms. Wilson
4. Jack of "Barney Miller"
5. Wings' bagpipes hit: "Mull of __"
6. 'Dum spiro, __' = 'While I breathe, I hope' in Latin
7. Bubbly glasses: 2 wds.
8. __ to riches
9. Peer Gynt's mother
10. "Blue Suede Shoes" by Carl __
11. Toronto-born actress Laura __ of "Bitten" on Space
12. Ancient theatre
13. Windblown silt deposit
21. Flight-leaving info
23. What Tiny Tim played, commonly
24. Highway exits
25. Some woodwinds
26. Newfoundland city: 2 wds.
27. Kit __ (Some chocolate treats)
28. Untruths
31. Mires
33. River of northern England
35. Bruce Cockburn's "If _ __ Falls"
36. Game with Knights
38. Corey of "The Lost Boys" (1987)
39. Money owed
41. Boisterously boast
42. Actor/narrator Morgan
44. Rock supergr.
45. Certain conjunction
46. Suffix meaning 'a thing that devours'
47. Actor, Willie __
49. Prefix to 'violet'
51. NY Mets ballpark, __ Field
54. Cape Town's home [acronym]
56. Provincial song: "__ to Newfoundland"
57. Litigate
58. Long ago time
59. Pen

Friday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Friday's Sudoku

3	8	5	6	9	7	1	2	4
2	4	6	1	3	8	5	9	7
7	9	1	2	4	5	6	3	8
6	1	2	4	8	9	7	5	3
4	7	3	5	1	2	9	8	6
8	5	9	7	6	3	2	4	1
5	2	4	3	7	1	8	6	9
9	3	7	8	5	6	4	1	2
1	6	8	9	2	4	3	7	5

								2
	3		1		8		7	
2		9				6		
		4		1				
7				4				6
				9		3		
		6				9		8
	9		7		2		5	
3								

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